

### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of enhancing a screen display of a gaming machine, the method including ~~the steps of:~~

creating a background scene for a game screen of a spinning reel game, ~~the spinning reel game comprising~~

creating a video representation of a plurality of spinning reels, each reel comprising a set of composite symbols; defining active components of the spinning reel game which are spun up on the reels to provide for various combinations of the composite symbols, at least one of the combinations being a winning combination wherein the ~~creating a plurality of composite symbols to overlie the background scene, the composite symbols forming the symbols of the reels; and wherein each composite symbol comprises a carrier portion and a game symbol portion,~~

rendering at least a the carrier portions of at least certain of the each composite symbols transparent to enable the background scene to be viewed through the composite symbol carrier portions, wherein the composite symbols of each reel are arranged end-to-end such that the carrier portions of the at least certain composite symbols define in combination a transparent reel strip portion through which the underlying background scene is viewable.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 which includes rendering said carrier portions ~~portion~~ of ~~each~~ said at least certain composite symbols ~~symbol~~ transparent by software implementation.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3 which includes setting said carrier portions ~~portion~~ of said at least certain ~~each~~ composite symbols ~~symbol~~ to an appropriate alpha channel value in an alpha channel range.

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5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 which includes employing an objects based graphic system for development of the composite symbol with symbol portions of the composite symbol being rendered opaque.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 which includes creating a representation of a flashing composite symbol.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6 which includes placing a part of the background scene over the composite symbol and placing a flashing composite symbol animation on top of the part of the background scene to provide a flashing composite symbol.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6 which includes causing the composite symbol itself to be flashed on and off directly on top of the underlying part of the background scene so that the background scene remains visible and any background animations continue while the composite symbol flashes.

9. (Currently Amended) A gaming machine screen display which comprises:

a background scene for ~~a game screen of a spinning reel game, the spinning reel game comprising~~

a video representation of a plurality of spinning reels, each reel comprising a set of composite symbols, and said symbols defining active components of the spinning reel game which are spun up on the reels to provide for various combinations of the composite symbols, at least one of the combinations being a winning combination and wherein the a plurality of composite symbols which overlie the background scene, and wherein each composite symbol comprising a carrier portion and a game symbol portion, at least a the carrier portion of at least certain of the composite symbols symbol being transparent to enable the background scene to be viewed at least through the composite symbol carrier portions, the composite symbols forming the symbols of the reels and wherein the composite symbols of each reel are arranged end-to-end such that the carrier portions of the at least certain composite symbols define in combination a transparent reel strip portion through which the underlying background scene is viewable.

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10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The gaming machine screen display of claim 9 in which said carrier portion of each composite symbol is rendered transparent by an appropriate selection of alpha channel value in an alpha channel range.

12. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine screen display of claim 9 which comprises a composite image with the composite symbols overlying the background scene.

13. (Previously Presented) The gaming machine screen display of claim 12 which incorporates one or more animations.

14. (New) The method of claim 4 which includes providing an alpha channel setting which results in completely transparent carrier portions.

15. (New) The gaming machine screen display of claim 11 in which said carrier portion is rendered completely transparent.

16. (New) A method of enhancing a screen display of a gaming machine, the method including:

creating a background scene for a game screen of a spinning reel game, the spinning reel game comprising a video representation of a plurality of spinning reels;

creating a plurality of composite symbols to overlie the background scene, the composite symbols defining active components of the spinning reel game which are spun up on the reels to provide for various combinations of composite symbols, at least one of the combinations being a winning combination, and each composite symbol comprising a carrier portion and a game symbol portion, wherein the composite symbols of each reel are arranged end-to-end;

rendering the carrier portions of at least certain of the composite symbols transparent to enable the background scene to be viewed therethrough; and

displaying a matrix of composite symbol positions on the screen with a periphery of the reels being provided by said carrier portions through which a substantial part of the underlying background scene is visible.

17. (New) A gaming machine screen display which comprises:

a background scene for a game screen of a spinning reel game, the spinning reel game comprising a video representation of a plurality of spinning reels;

a plurality of composite symbols which overlie the background scene, the composite symbols defining active components of the spinning reel game which are spun up on the reels to provide for various combinations of composite symbols, at least one of the combinations being a winning combination, and each composite symbol comprising a carrier portion and a game symbol portion with the composite symbols of each reel being arranged end-to-end, at least the carrier portions of at least certain of the composite symbols being transparent to enable the background scene to be viewed through the carrier portions; and

the display including a matrix of the composite symbols on the screen with a periphery of the reels being provided by the carrier portions within which periphery a substantial part of the underlying background scene is visible.

18. (New) A computer program which implements a spinning reel game comprising a video representation of a plurality of spinning reels, said program being arranged to generate on a gaming machine screen display for said game:

a background scene for said spinning reel game, and

a plurality of composite symbols which overlie the background scene, the composite symbols defining active components of the spinning reel game which are spun up on the reels under influence of the program to provide for various combinations of symbols, at least one of the combinations being a winning combination, and each composite symbol comprising a carrier portion and a game symbol portion with the composite symbols of each reel being arranged end-to-end, at least the carrier portions of at least certain of the composite symbols being rendered transparent such that they define,

in combination, in respect of each reel, a transparent reel strip portion through which the underlying background scene is viewable.

19. (New) A gaming machine having a display and a game controller arranged to control images on the display, the game controller being arranged to play a spinning reel game comprising a video representation of a plurality of spinning reels, each reel comprising a set of symbols defining active components of the spinning reel game which are spun up on the reels to provide for various combinations of symbols, at least one of the combinations being a prize winning combination, said display comprising:

a background scene for a game screen of said spinning reel game, and

wherein the symbols comprise composite symbols which overlie the background scene, each composite symbol comprising a carrier portion and a game symbol portion, at least the carrier portion of at least certain of the composite symbols being transparent to enable the background scene to be viewed through the carrier portions, wherein the composite symbols form the symbols of the reels, and wherein the composite symbols of each reel are arranged end-to-end such that the carrier portions of the at least certain composite symbols define, in combination, a transparent reel strip portion through which the underlying background scene is viewable.

20. (New) The method of Claim 1, comprising rendering at least certain of entire composite symbols transparent so as to reveal a portion of the background scene coincident with the at least certain composite symbols.

21. (New) The gaming machine screen display of Claim 9, wherein one or more of the game symbols of the at least certain composite symbols having transparent carrier portions are also transparent.

22. (New) A gaming machine display comprising:

a background scene for a game scene of a spinning reel game;

a representation of a plurality of spinning reels, each reel comprising a set of composite symbols at least one including a transparent carrier portion and a game symbol

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portion, wherein said composite symbols are displayed to overlie said background scene and wherein said background scene is at least partially viewable through said carrier portions; and

at least one pay line identified, game symbol portions displayed on said at least one pay line defining a winning or a losing outcome.

23. (New) The display of Claim 22, wherein said transparent carriers of adjacent composite symbols cooperate to define a transparent reel overlying said background scene and wherein the background scene is viewable through said transparent reel.

24. (New) The display of Claim 22, further comprising highlighting the game symbol portion of any composite symbol on a pay line for a winning combination.